

Testimony: H.B. No. 5030 An Act Making Adjustments to State Expenditures for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2015

My name is Ronald Langner and I am from Tolland. My wife and I have a 27 year old son, Scott, who is autistic, has epilepsy and is developmentally disabled. Scott has been a DDS client since he was 10 years old. Every year at his annual DDS review, it was discussed and understood that Scott would require residential support in order to live outside our home. When Scott was 18 his name was added to the waiting list for housing supports. Scott is now 27 and is still living with us. As a result of significant reductions in the DDS budget over the past few years, funding to provide adequate residential supports for young adults like Scott, are now non-existent. These funding reductions have resulted in DDS adopting the now existing policy that clients will have to remain in their family home unless and until there is an emergency, like the critical illness or deaths of the parents. DDS would then view Scott's situation as an EMERGENCY placement which would result in Scott being moved out of his home and placed to somewhere not his choosing and completely new to him. This is not humane or logical – this is just wrong. Scott is now 27 and for several years he has been talking about moving into his own apartment with roommates, just like his older brother and sister did. He has dreams and desires to live his own life, separate from his parents. We have spent his whole life caring for Scott in a loving and nurturing environment, preparing him to be as independent as he possibly can be, and now we are being told that the only way Scott can move out of our house is when an emergency occurs, like our deaths. This is just inhuman treatment of an individual who is not capable of caring for himself. I am 74 now and my wife has significant health problems. We would like to have the opportunity to help Scott transition into a place where he wants to live, now, while we are physically and mentally able to.

In order to do this the monies which in the past have been cut from the DDS budget need to be restored. Presently DDS is attempting to change from the old system of operating Southbury and Regional Centers etc. and instead move to a system of outsourcing residential support. Southbury and the Regional Centers are however still operational. The cost of operating these systems is very expensive (est. \$400,000 per individual) and therefore consumes an extremely large portion of DDS's residential support budget. Thus there are no monies for residential support for individuals like Scott. Since DDS is at the same time is attempting to close these facilities they are not allowing any new individuals to be enrolled in Southbury or the Regional Centers. Until Southbury and the five Regional Centers are closed the only residential supports available will be emergency placements unless monies for residential support are added to the DDS budget. Restoring monies to the DDS budget are necessary if individuals like Scott are going to be able to realize their hopes and dreams. Forcing them into an emergency placement upon the death of a parent is inhumane. Please do not let them down.

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